

WASHINGTON STATE LAWYERS



COVID-19 UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMS

Nearly 1,000,000 people in Washington State are newly out of work as a result of the COVID-19 emergency and mandatory social distancing orders. Hundreds of thousands have filed claims for unemployment insurance (UI) with the Employment Security Department. Many thousands will have their claims lost, untimely processed, or inappropriately denied. They will need legal information, advice, and representation to access UI benefits to which they are entitled.

Our legal aid system is overwhelmed with requests for help with UI claims. To address this, Governor Inslee recently directed COVID-19 emergency funding to the Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA) for legal assistance and representation of UI claimants.

OCLA seeks to **recruit up to 100 attorneys** willing and able to accept a minimum of 20 claimant referrals between May 15, 2020 and June 30, 2021. Because UI appeals are conducted telephonically, these cases offer excellent opportunities for remote lawyering. Cases will be screened prior to referral; the substantive law and legal processes are relatively uncomplicated; cases do not require extensive amounts of attorney time; and excellent training and support resources have been developed.

Under this program, OCLA will:

- Ensure UI contract attorneys receive substantive law and legal process training and support through the statewide Unemployment Law Project
- Contract with private attorneys willing to accept referrals of UI claimants at the rate of \$100/hr.

A template of the Emergency UI Claimant Contract Document can be found [here](#).

Attorneys interested and willing to handle UI cases should contact:

Unemployment Insurance Program Manager

Office of Civil Legal Aid

ocla@ocla.wa.gov

PLEASE HELP US HELP OUR NEWLY HURTING NEIGHBORS